

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in the present application. None of the claims were amended in this response. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Office Action indicate the oath/declaration was defective because the date stated for prior foreign application does not correspond to the date on the certified copy of the priority document. Applicant is still in the process of obtaining new declarations and will file them in due course, shortly following this response.

The drawings were objected to for informalities. In light of the amendments to the drawings, applicants submit the informalities have been corrected. Withdrawal of the objection is earnestly requested.

Claims 1-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by *Shankar* (US Patent 6,768,733). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Favorable reconsideration is earnestly requested.

Specifically, *Shankar* does not teach or suggest the features of providing a signaling unit having at least two (or three) line units “connected to one another and used to set up a connection for transmitting user data, wherein at least one of the line units uses a different external signaling protocol as compared to the other line units” and “passing on signaling messages, arriving at one of the at least one line units using a different external signaling protocol for switching of the data packets, to another of the line units with the aid of internal signaling messages defined for the signaling unit, wherein the internal signaling identifies an appropriate line unit for passing on signaling messages given the protocol that is required.” as recited in claim 1 and similarly recited in claims 17-19.

Further to the remarks provided in the previous Office Action, the claimed configuration describes a method for transmitting user data packets, where a signaling unit (for example, a switching center or switching exchange - see specification page 9 line 11; FIG. 1) is used comprising at least three line units (as in claim 1), or at least two line units (as in claims 2, and 17-19). The line units set up a connection for transmitting user data in data packets, and can be set up in an optional manner (i.e., passing through “an appropriate line unit for passing on signaling messages given the protocol that is required”). Thus, unlike the prior art discussed below, there is no fixed order which line unit has to be connected with a certain other line unit.

The claimed configuration is materially different from the prior art fixed connections between line units for signaling in packet oriented networks (see page 3, lines 15 -22 of the present specification). The signaling process under the present claims is done within one signaling unit by using an internal signaling protocol. The internal signaling protocol comprises the interface between the different line units of the signaling unit, where the line units are used for the conversion of a respective external signaling protocol into an internal signaling protocol and vice versa. Thus, multiple line units (i.e., two or three) for different external signaling protocols can be developed and integrated into one signaling unit to adapt to new tasks within a data network

Regarding *Shankar*, the reference does not teach or suggest a signaling unit having at least three (or two) line units connected to one another in a manner where the internal signaling “identifies an appropriate line unit for passing on signaling messages given the protocol that is required.” The voice calls in *Shankar* are carried from an originating node to a terminating node over a packet-switching network, in which the voice signaling processing is separated from the processing of the voice data (col. 4, lines 19-26). For the voice signaling processing, signaling units are used at the originating and terminating side. The signaling units include three abstract machine components (OCC, UCM, TCC) which are installed for each call handled by the protocol converter (col. 5, lines 24-32). The protocol converter is set up as a virtual switch in *Shankar*, where individual protocol converters are arranged within respective signaling units (FIG. 1: 120, 140), where each protocol converter is assigned to a specific node (FIG. 1: 100, 160 - col. 5, lines 6-22).

The OCC in *Shankar* receives a signaling messages from the originating node unit and transforms them into universal protocol messages (col. 5, lines 24-35). The universal protocol messages are forwarded to the UCM, which uses them to control the originating code unit using a control link (col. 5, lines 36-40). The universal protocol messages are then transferred to the TCC, which converts them into a signaling message of the protocol that provides connectivity to the terminating signaling unit (col. 5, lines 48-53).

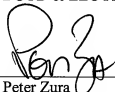
Again, *Shankar* teaches a signaling unit (protocol converter) that takes incoming messages and converts them in each case (OCC, UCM, TCC), to a different protocol. This is materially different from the presently amended claims that “pass on” signaling messages by

identifying an appropriate line unit given the protocol that is required (see amended specification, pages 9-10). In *Shankar*, the protocol does not “identify” a line unit, since all of the information is converted for a terminating unit of which a connection has already been established (col. 13, lines 49-61). Second, the signaling through each machine component (OCC, UCM, TCC) is performed in a fixed manner. In other words, at the start of the call, the OCC converts signals for the UCM, which in turn converts signals for the TCC. There is no identification of an “appropriate line unit given the protocol that is required” in *Shankar*, since the process through which the protocols are converted remains the same in each instance (col. 5, lines 32-53; col. 13, lines 1-61).

In light of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-19 are in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. Applicants earnestly request an early Notice of Allowance. If any fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the Examiner is authorized to deduct such fees from deposit account no. 02-1818. If such a deduction is made, please indicate the attorney docket number (0112740-273) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

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